

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
WINDHOEK
04 OCTOBER 2016**

The Assembly met pursuant to the adjournment.

HON SPEAKER: took the Chair and read Prayers and the Affirmation.

HON SPEAKER: Any petitions? Reports of Standing and Select Committees? Other Reports and Papers? Deputy Finance Minister.

TABLING: ANNUAL REPORT

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, I lay upon the table a report of the Auditor General on the account of:

1. Ministry of Safety and Security, department of Namibia Correctional Service for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2015;
2. Diamond Board Fund for the Financial Year ended 31st March, December 2012, 2013 and 2014;
3. Diamond Valuation Fund for the Financial Year ended 31st March, December 2014;
4. Film and Video Development Fund of Namibia Film Commission for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2015, and;
5. Meat Board for the Financial Year ended also 31st March 2015.

I so Move, Honourable Speaker.

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**NOTICE OF QUESTIONS
HON NAUYOMA**

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of Questions? Honourable Nauyoma.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

QUESTION NO. 86:

HON NAUYOMA: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker I give notice that on Thursday, the 5th of October, I will ask the Minister of Environment and Tourism about the plight of the farmers in the Tsumkwe constituency particularly the Omatoko.

We have land that they are busy moving these communal farmers from that area that were allocated by traditional leaders in 2013. In view of this, I want to know whether there what are contingency plans or arrangements that are in place when they are going to move these cattle for these farmers due to the devastating drought situation that we have in the country whether they have allocated another place where they are going to move these farmers. If not, what other measures that can be taken because this is a very serious situation.

People moved into this area because of the drought situation elsewhere in the country but if you are saying, we are going them at this moment when we have a serious drought situation, we need to know what measures this Government has to help these Namibians who would in my view be feeling left out, because if we are only concerned with the conservancies that needs to be around and we are not concerned with the livelihood of the people with the animal, then I am afraid how it will work out can maybe some answers from the Honourable Minister how they are going to approach this kind of situation. I thank you.

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
HON SHANGHALA**

HON SPEAKER: Table the question. Notices of Motions? Messages from the Head of State? Ministerial Statements? Honourable Attorney-General.

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker thank you for the opportunity to address this august House on the allegation levelled against the Republic of Namibia by the Caprivi concerned group, under what seems to be the delusion of leadership of one Mr Edwin Samati the entity so-called Secretary General.

We first became aware of the existence of the allegations when on March 2nd 2016 the African Commission on Human and People's Rights corresponded to us as the lawyers of Government informing us that the Commission was seized with such a complaint by the Caprivi concerned group.

A request from the complainant the Caprivi concerned group to present evidence and arguments on admissibility within two months in accordance with Rule 105(3) of the rules and procedure of the African Commission on human and people's rights, on April 4th 2016 it seems that the Caprivi concerned group indeed responded to the ruling of the Commission and forwarded its submissions on the admissibility. It also seems that the Commission transmitted the same to us via the Ministry of International Relations and Corporation on April 11th 2016.

Somehow that note of April 11th 2016 would be the not received or transmitted appropriately and we only learnt of the Commission determination in terms of Rule 105(3) of the rules of procedure that the Republic of Namibia was granted two months within which to submit its observation on the submissions of the complainant when on September 14th 2016 the Namibian Sun ran a story titled 'Commission wants clarity on the Caprivi question'.

Needless to state we were stand, and inquired for the Commission and as a result committed to a response by or on yesterday October 2nd 2016. In

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correspondence dated September 2nd 2016 the Chairperson of the Commission the Honourable Commissioner Pancy Dracula addressed correspondence to His Excellency the President Doctor Hage G Geingob calling upon him to implement the provisional measures the Commission had set and to report back to the Commission within 15 days of receipt of the correspondence.

The provisional measures were taken in terms of Rules 98(4) of the rules of procedure and in essence whether the Republic of Namibia provides clarification to the Commission regarding the alleged violations and refrain from committing acts of harassment, intimidation and force disappearance, torture and ill treatment, arbitrary detention, arbitrary restriction on the right to freedom and association and Assembly that the Republic of Namibia fully investigates or, in the alternative, allows international regional human rights mechanism, un-impended access to the affected areas in order to carry out prompt and impartial investigations into the above stated allegations without any delay so that these reports can be verified.

That the Republic of Namibia ensures that those responsible for the above stated alleged violation were held accountable, in accordance to the relevant international and regional standard, that the Republic of Namibia refrain from taking measures which will have the effect of pre-disposing matters, which are at the core of the allegation before its conclusion, including signing the boundary treaty with the Republic of Botswana, which would involve demarcating the southern boundary line of the Caprivi strip. And that the Republic of Namibia genuinely complies with the latter and spirit of the African Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against torture, as well as other relevant human rights instruments to which the Republic of Namibia is a party.

The Chairperson of the Commission went further to indicate that the responses would be tabled at the next ordinary session of the Commission and transmitted onwards to the African Union policy organs.

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Mr Speaker before, I make some of the allegations made by the Caprivi concerned group, permit me to unequivocally state that the Government of the Republic of Namibia, on behalf of this entire Republic, denies the allegation, reiterate its commitment to the highest possible standards of human rights practices and once again, invite all in sundry, local and foreign human rights organisations to come to Namibia and put to test any of the allegations made of abductions, mass graves and the like.

As long as we are consulted and we are aware of any international human right NGOs who need to come to Namibia we will through the Government machineries facilitate inspections in areas we hope would be pointed out by those who know where the mass graves are or the disappeared persons. Mr Speaker I must also call this August House to the attention of Article 63(1) of the Namibian Constitution, which generally empowers the National Assembly to make and repeal laws for the peace or in good governance on Namibia in the best interest of the people of Namibia.

I hope I speak for every Member of the Namibian Parliament in saying that when we exercise our powers to particularly grant the Executive the concurrence to accede to or to ratify international agreements we do so with a view that our Republic will honour its obligations and not only pay lip service to these obligations.

A good example in this regard is how the Government with funds appropriated in terms of the Namibian constitution by this Parliament was able to pay over N\$60 Million per the defence of the secessionist accused persons who had attempted to dismember the Zambezi region for the very Republic but pay their competent defences.

Namibia has indeed ratify the African Charter amongst other human rights instruments and we will continue to live up to our obligations to the best of our abilities. Mr Speaker since we have responded to the provision and measures of the Commission and we have not made observations on the admissibility of the submissions of the complainant we are waiting a ruling of the Commission on extension of time given the communication

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mishaps and later on have to consider our responses to the merits of the allegations and wait for the Commission to make and render a decision in terms of Rule 110 of the rules of procedures.

This matter stems from nowhere else than the fertile mind of the secessionists on August 2nd 1999 when they launched arm attack on various Government facilities in Katima Mulilo under the guise of one Caprivi liberation army which sort the succession of the Caprivi region as it was then known from the Republic of Namibia.

As the Honourable Members would recall, arrests were made numerous subsequently, 278 charges were duly laid against 122 persons who reasonably believed to have been involved or otherwise complicit in the attacks.

These charges ranging from murder, attempted murder, high treason and sedation and the rest were made in accordance with the Namibia Criminal Procedure Act of 1977 and they culminated in the longest criminal trial our justice system has had to adjudicate to date due to the large number of accused persons and witnesses. The State alone closes its case after leading 379 witnesses.

The complexities of the issue involve the postponement at the request of the accused persons and the numerous interlocutory proceedings that were initiated by the parties during the course of the trial. The trial was finally concluded on 16th September 2016 with 35 Accused persons being acquitted of all charges and 30 accused persons being convicted by the High Court of Namibia in the charges levelled against them.

During the course of the trial 22 persons died with natural causes while 44 accused persons were discharged in February 2013 in terms of Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1997 as the court, find that the state failed to provide sufficient evidence on which these accused persons to be convicted by the court on the charges laid against them or into the witness desk hostility and or inability to identify certain accused persons.

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To date 37 of these accused persons were released in February 2013 by virtue of the court finding that they have no charges to answer in terms of Section 124 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1977 has instituted individual claims as per their constitutional rights in the High Court of Namibia for compensation in millions by the Government of the Republic of Namibia and these civil claims are currently being adjudicated.

In turn, the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Namibia as per her constitutional mandate in terms of Article 88 has also instituted appeals to the Supreme Court of Namibia against certain acquittals in the Caprivi treason trial for which is a substantiated opinion that the High Court of Namibia did not make a finding which the state agrees with based on the evidence brought for by the state. The Supreme Court will pronounce it so on a matter in due course and it is the state's intention to accept and respect the outcome thereof as it is known to do.

Mr Speaker, I did not intend to list all the allegations. However, it maybe necessary to read out some of them for the information not only the Honourable Members but the general public. It is alleged on March 1990 and June 1999 the Republic of Namibia illegally occupied and forcibly annex the Caprivi strip to the application of laws to the eastern Caprivi Zipfella Act 1990 which extended Namibian laws to the Caprivi strip.

Since 1989, the Republic of Namibia it is also alleged that since 1998 the Republic of Namibia has committed gross human rights violations on Caprivi including summary executions, enforced disappearances, torture and unlawful detention amounting to oppression or state repression. It is alleged that in 2004 and 2006 the Republic of Namibia banned and denied registration of Caprivi based political parties then with the UDP Caprivi National Democratic Party, CNDP and Candidature of National Unity CNU.

It is alleged that local remedies have been exhausted as the Caprivi concerned group have been attempting to enter dialogue with the Republic of Namibia to consider a referendum since April 12th 2012 but its attempts have been repeatedly met apparently with two acts of treason and arrest by

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the Government. It is alleged that on July 14th 2016 following a two days visit by the President of the Republic of Namibia to the Republic of Botswana the state television NBC TV reported that Namibian Botswana are to draft a boundary treaty which would involve demarcate the southern boundary line of the Caprivi strip. The report states that representatives of the two countries met in Addis Ababa in June 2016 to discuss the boundary treaty and that to meet again to finalise the draft in Botswana in August.

It is alleged that the complainant alleged well that the Caprivi is a disputed contested territory both political and legally and should therefore not be the subject or object of any boundary treaty pending a legal or political solution because both Namibia and Botswana may lack solvent or territorial rights over this trip and or it vicinity and that the Caprivi is not legally part of Namibia formally during the Southern Africa.

They challenged Namibia's territorial rights or title over the Caprivi strip and it is one of the fundamental aspects to the allegation. In addition to seeking redress for the human rights violation suffered by so-called victims including a gentleman one Mr Retif Kangongo who was allegedly abducted only to surface as having spent time at Divundu and thereafter leaving Namibia for Botswana to the Muhembo border post. We have a copy of the departure form he filled out here and by the way none of his relatives reported him missing including the Caprivi concerned group yet they deemed it fit to go and report such things to the African Commission on human and people's rights.

Mr Speaker, the President has complied with the directive of the African Commission on Human and People's rights and responded at length. We have provided annexure substantiating every response in the response. Over 250 pages of annexure have been filed and we are confident that what the Caprivi concerned group alleges is not substantiated by law, by history or for that matter, does not enjoy the support of the residents of the Zambezi region.

Those are loyal Namibians and the Zambezi region will remain an integral

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**COMMITTEE STAGE – UNIT TRUSTS
CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL
HON ITHETE**

part of the Republic of Namibia. Long live the Republic of Namibia and I thank you.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us move on.

The Secretary will read the First Order of the Day.

**RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE STAGE – UNIT
TRUSTS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL [B.13 – 2016]**

SECRETARY: Resumption of Committee Stage –*Unit Trusts Control Amendment Bill* [B.13 – 2016].

HON SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Deputy Minister of Finance move that the Assembly now goes into Committee?

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: I so move.

HON SPEAKER: Any objection? Who seconds? Agreed to. I now call on the Deputy Speaker as a Chairperson of the Whole House Committee to take the chair.

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**THIRD READING – UNIT TRUSTS
CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL
HON ITHETE**

ASSEMBLY IN COMMITTEE

HON CHAIRPERSON OF THE WHOLE HOUSE COMMITTEE:

The Whole House Committee is called to order. The Committee has to consider the Unit Trust Control Amendment Bill.

I put Clauses 1, 2 and 3. Any discussion? Any objection? Agreed to.

I put the Short Title Clause Number 3. Any discussions? Any objection? Agreed to.

I put the Title. Any discussion? Any objection? Agreed to.

I shall report the Bill with those amendments.

Honourable Speaker the Committee has gone through the Bill [Bill 13 – 2016], and the accompanied copy and agreed with those amendments.

ASSEMBLY RESUMED

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. That was short and sweet to the point. Does the Honourable Deputy Minister Move that the Bill now be read a third time?

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: I so Move, Honourable Speaker.

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**THIRD READING – UNIT TRUSTS
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HON SPEAKER: Any objection? Who seconds? Agreed to. Any further discussion? There being none, does Honourable Deputy Minister wish to reply?

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I wish to thank the House for the overwhelming support. Thank you very much.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. I now put the question that the Bill be read a third time. Any objection? Agreed to. Thank you.

The Secretary will read the Bill a Third Time.

UNIT TRUSTS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL [B.13 – 2016]

SECRETARY: *Unit Trusts Control Amendment Bill* [B.13 – 2016].

HON SPEAKER: The Secretary will read the Second Order of the Day.

**RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE STAGE –
MEDICAL AID FUNDS AMENDMENT BILL [B.14 – 2016]**

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**COMMITTEE STAGE – MEDICAL AID
FUND AMENDMENT BILL
HON ITHETE**

SECRETARY: Resumption of Committee Stage –*Medical Aid Fund Amendment Bill* [B.14 – 2016].

HON SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Deputy Minister of Finance Move that the Assembly now goes into Committee?

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: I so Move, Honourable Speaker.

HON SPEAKER: Any objection? Who seconds? Agreed to.

I now call the Deputy Speaker as the Chairperson of the Whole House Committee to take the chair.

ASSEMBLY IN COMMITTEE

HON CHAIRPERSON OF THE WHOLE HOUSE COMMITTEE:
The Whole House Committee is called to order. The Committee has to consider Medical Aid Fund Amendment Bill.

I put Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4. Any discussions? Any objection? Agreed to.

I put the title. Any discussion? Any objection? Agreed to.

I shall report the Bill without amendment.

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**THIRD READING – MEDICAL AID
FUND AMENDMENT BILL
HON ITHETE**

Honourable Speaker, the Committee has gone through the Bill, Bill 14, 2016 with the accompanying copies and agreed it without amendments.

ASSEMBLY RESUMED

HON SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Does the Honourable Deputy Minister Move that the Bill be read a third time?

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: I so Move, Honourable Speaker.

HON SPEAKER: Any objection? Who seconds? Agreed to. Any further discussion? There being none, does the Honourable Deputy Minister wish to reply.

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, Honourable Speaker I want to thank the House for their input last week during the discussion of this Bill and for their overwhelming support. Thank you very much.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. In now put the question that the Bill be read a third time, any objection, agreed to.

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**REPORT ON STUDY VISIT TO
GERMANY ON RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The Secretary will now read the Bill a Third Time.

MEDICAL AID FUND AMENDMENT BILL [B.14 – 2016]

SECRETARY: *Medical Aid Fund Amendment Bill [B.14 – 2016].*

HON SPEAKER: The Secretary will read the Third Order of the Day.

**RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF REPORT
ON STUDY VISIT TO GERMANY ON RENEWABLE ENERGY**

SECRETARY: *Resumption of Consideration of Report on the Study Visit to Germany on the Renewable Energy.*

HON SPEAKER: When the debate was adjourned on Thursday, the 29th September, the question before the Assembly was a report by Honourable Swartz. Any further discussion? There being none, does Honourable Swartz wish to reply?

The Honourable Member is not in the House. The Deputy Chairperson do you wish to reply? I am not insisting, but if you wish to do so. Thank you very much.

I now put the question that the report be adopted. Any objection? Agreed to.

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**DISCUSSION ON PROVISION OF
ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY SCHOOL GIRLS
HON VENAANI**

The Notice of the Motion is the one of Honourable Venaani. Does the Honourable Member Move the Motion? Who seconds? Any objection? Agreed to.

I now call the Honourable Member, Honourable Venaani. You have the floor.

HON VENAANI: Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of this august House, a Russian philosopher named Irvin once remarked and I quote, ‘if you wait for absolutely everything to be ready, you will never be ready’.

Honourable Speaker, I rise to motivate perhaps a sensitive issue in the eyes of patriarch dominated society where a person of my gender would be considered inappropriate to venture in such a debate. However, I wish to remind those Members who consider this to be a taboo to their lives that I am a father of girls and a leader of many people and thus all matters that require developmental intervention are equally our issues.

In 2003 the UN Secretary General Kofi Anan wants stated, ‘that there is no tool for development more effective in the education of girls. No other policies is likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health’.

Other key benefits associated with girls education include protection against early pregnancy and other sexual reproductive harms including HIV Aids. Girls in Sub Saharan Africa bear a disproportionately high burden of such harms and on both girls enrolment ratios in the regions have increased in recent years. Large inequalities, gaps in primary education remained higher according to the UN report of 2024.

Gender gaps are even more pronounced in secondary education. Honourable Speaker in excess of interviews done by the UN of three

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women from three different continent and this was their own reply in verbatim to help us understand the veracity of the problem and the endurance in which many girls must go through.

One: A lady from India says the following ‘I often reflect back to the day in a bathroom the day I first got my period, the shame that swept over me came every single month right through my years in school and college. At first, I was afraid of being bullied for having stained a skirt. In the later years I was embarrassed by the word of plastics and cotton between my legs start crack with every step I took announcing my period to the world at large.

I blame the hygienic insufficient toilet facilities in my Indian college for the instances of urinary tract infections that I suffered in silence’. A lady from Israel says the following ‘in Judaism there is something called the laws of purity essentially according to this guideline, couples should not have sex, sleep in the same bed, pass one another anything, share food and drinks or even lip something like a piece of furniture together during the wife’s period. After the woman’s period the couple has seven clean days in which they still do not touch’.

The experience of an African child in Burundi says the following. ‘When black families pass on the cycle lane fame to new generations they validate the code of solecism rather than address our problems whether physical or mental. We learn to live in pain, silent and complacent. Visible and vocal acknowledgement of pain is for other people. We are more than our pain even if our pain cripples us, life as a black person traumatising enough and that trauma is in brain in our bones being here, no. Knowing this country’s history I believe we accept pain because for so long that is all we have known’.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members news, letters and reports from African women education groups and none Governmental organisations across Sub Saharan Africa report on the lack of latrines and clean water supplies in school grounds. The unaffordable nature of sanitary material

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practise modern pits, the likelihood that school girls are absent three to four days per month rather than managing on school grounds and risk embarrassment of menstrual leaks, the harassment of school girls by male students who suspect they maybe menstruating, the potential proposed girls to targeted for sexual abuse and to be at risk for unwanted pregnancies and permanent disorders.

Given the potential of all of the above to disrupt girls ability to attend and concentrate in a classroom, there is an urgent need to explore in document girls present day experiences of menstruating in schooling. With the hearing focus on the increasing access to education there has been less focus on our formal education institutions of gender norms of the wider society. To explain these gaps attention has been drawn to possible linkages between poor schools base sanitation and girls low attendance rate.

At the same time the inter dependence of the gender education and sanitation according to the Millennium Development Goals has received increased interest from donors and NGOs. According to a research of Barbara Cross, sighted in her work merit of 2011, she says the following. 'Without sanitation you cannot achieve universal primary education. You cannot promote gender equality and empower women and you cannot reduce child mortality'. While macro level data are available on sanitation access on gender school attendance, the every life experiences of school girls with poor sanitation, access are poorly understood according to Somer reflecting the difficulties of obtaining information on such sensitive issues, academic research on the influence of puberty and menstruation on girls school attendance has been quite scarce. Nevertheless, interest in menstruation and poor sanitary products access as a possible causes of school girls absenteeism has attracted attention from the media, NGOs and policy makers following efforts to start progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

In Sub Saharan Africa poverty and intended gender inequalities are key causes of girls dropping out of schools or even engaging in transaction of

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theft to obtain money to buy sanitary towels so that they can continue to attend school and Somer argues that as girl mature a collision occurs in school environment that continue to be gender discriminatory resulting in unnecessary and preventable interruption to girls, active school participation and attendance.

To address this, the benefit of multi sexual initiatives that link sanitation with education on health hygiene and girls' rights have been highlighted according to the work of Thomas Kith and Somer. In taking such approaches forward, Somer emphasises the importance of capturing girls lip perspective on contextual factors impacting on their lives in a modern society. Using empirical data from Kenya Kisimo to illustrate how everyday geography is for menstruating and puberty reflects and reproduce inequalities, gender school attendance, and broader life chances.

Brosherly in her work of 1996, open ended approach to feminist political ecology that treats gender as a crucial variable in shading resource access and control, provide inspiration for use, framework to examine gender inequalities in access to social capital resources especially education. Another important influence is a broader body informed research by Forum including Nightingale analysis of how Hindus in India ideas of ritual purity lie behind gender partial restrictions in Napal and are maintained through everyday special bodily practices, which reinforces existing power relations.

Drawing on true love informed analysis of the implications of inequalities in water and sanitation access for everyday lives and right in low-income areas of New Delhi there is a highlight everyday inequality forged on the body within particular spaces of schools. It is also important to utilise the work of Sautana who argued that the gender suffering over access to uncontaminated water in Bangladesh, which shows how resource struggled are not just material but are mediated through body spaces and emotions. In particular, there is a need to illustrate how emotional geography of puberty and menstruation reinforce gender special relations

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and access of social capital resources in Kisumu especially where girls lack access to reliable and hygienic sanitation and sanitary products.

Honourable Members, emphasising the linkages between girls absents from school and poor sanitation provision several studies in Sub Saharan Africa have highlighted important everyday challenges associated with managing menstruation at school environment.

Somer's research in Tanzania of 2010 emphasises difficulties created by lack of access to private toilets with water supplies, fee sanitary products, pain killers for menstrual cramps and spare clothes if leaks occur, long school days typical eight in Kenya that increase the risk of menstrual leaks coupled with frequent harassment by boys in and around toilet areas and the add to the shame and embarrassment experienced by many girls.

Where it is difficult to change sanitary products, infections are likely to be higher and girls may suffer discomfort and stigmatisation as a result. Given such constraints, it is unsurprising that many Kenya girls for example view menstruation as the most significant social stressor and barrier to schooling and prepared to manage their menstrual at home. In Sub Saharan Africa more generally this practical difficulties are often exacerbated by low levels of knowledge about the biological process for menstruation compared to knowledge about the taboos surrounding menstruation.

The Pan African NGO FWE, Foundation for Women Educationalist find that a counsel of silent surrounding menstruation in rural Uganda result in being ignored in families, schools and communities. In Kenya girls often struggled to obtain information on this problem due to a lack of supported school staff or even family member to discuss these issues. Honourable Members the one issue that is very important to shyness and embarrassment.

Field-based accounts of this problem were raised in many reports highlighting the practical and emotional difficulties that many girls face in

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managing their menstrual and hiding their menstruating status. They also highlighted the importance of emotion as an influence that everyday geography of menstruation and puberty pinpointing in the context of girls access to education, the way in which emotions are part of the complex ways that people access and use resources.

In many of the state schools visited for example the lack of privacy offered by toilets cause embarrassment for these girls, good hygiene was difficult as water taps were not present where distance from the latrines so quadratic present and there were no facilities for disposing of used ASSISTANCE.

Another cause of menstruation related embarrassment sign was the fear of the leakages that many girls have to go through. A key factor contributing to embarrassment about menstruation in a study area seems to a role of wider cultural taboos inhibiting open discussion in the topic.

Such silences cause many girls to view menstruation as something shameful. A study of mother daughter communication regarding sexual maturation in Nairobi for example found many barriers including mothers knowing little about puberty and daughters feeling embarrassed to ask for information. A Kenyan national table reveal that under 50% of parents discuss sex related topics with their children reflecting a common perception that is inappropriate for parents and children to discuss sexual maturation.

Honourable Members, all these empirical research and writings bring us at one important narrative. How does all escape and in fact the Namibian girl at Okahao, the Namibian girl at Kuruman, Lizauli, Duigrant, Okombahe, Tjaka or Mbeyo? How many are trapped in this biological cycle without no immediate help without support? It is time that we hid the words of Irvin Chukenev who said we cannot wait for absolute everything to be ready. We need to take action and take charge in this precarious challenge of modern day gender trapping.

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HON DIENDA**

During my last research I realised that various NGOs and individuals in our country have started commendable efforts to raise funds and designing a reusable pad called the cup that has a durability of over two years. However, my research has also find out that these programs that are started by NGOs and individuals are a drop in an ocean because the problem is much greater and many rural poverty stricken girls cannot access sanitary pads. We need a national effort to fight this developmental rights to our girl child that limit economic advancement of the Namibian girl child. Honourable Speaker our society today pay taxes on women menstruation pads, which make this commodity more expensive.

I think it is time for this legislature to consider and removing any tax on this important commodity. We provide free condoms in our society to help solve the spread of HIV Aids and yet we argue that these pads would be expensive. We live in a modern world and our girl child should be given all support to prosper and no biological interest should be allowed to hamper their progress.

Honourable Speaker, I therefore ask for this Motion to be referred to a Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Social Development and Family Planning for further study so that they can really study the problem and come back with a proposal as to how we can really jointly fight this devices that challenges the Namibian girl.

I fervently hope that we will find inanity in the way forward and hold each other hands as we charter a new response to our girl child. Honourable Members, I thank you in advance.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Dienda.

HON DIENDA: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker Honourable Members, something so simple like a pad could be so life

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changing for many of us buying sanitary pads is as easy as buying bread and milk because we can afford it but it is not the case for many women and girls in our country. They are at a permanent disadvantaged as they are forced to stay at home during that time of the month, as they are unable to afford this basic necessity. In the rural areas Honourable Speaker and in poor families most girls do not have hygienic way of managing their period.

Due to this many are forced to use newspaper, kitchen sponges, toilet paper and old clothes to manage their menstruation. Because of unhygienic nature of these materials, women experience rashes, sores and bruises.

Furthermore, the embarrassment of leaks, pain and discomfort from using these materials causes girls to rather stay at home during the menstruation cycle instead of going to school. This leads the young girls missing out on a lot of important of school work and it is not always possible for them to catch up.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members knowledge is empowering. Puberty education alone will not solve our problem. How many girls and women have been educated regarding menstrual health and hygiene? Not all the girls are fortunate enough to have parents like Honourable McHenry Venaani who feel comfortable discussing these issues with their teenage daughter and also have mothers. A lot of girls are also from child headed homes.

Honourable Speaker, we do not just want more girls sitting in schools but we want our girls who are safe, who are learning and who believe in their own dignity and have the tools to maintain that dignity. Yes, Honourable Speaker our girls are eager to learn but the environment must enable learning and prevent outside factors like no access to sanitary pads.

The provision of sanitary pads can positively influence girls' school attendance and with better attendance and with better attendance will

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hopefully come better results. Even the distribution of soap together with the sanitary pads would be appreciated Honourable Speaker. We have to give our girls an opportunity to be free to participate in daily activities not to feel shame or embarrassed and to empower them with sanitary pads.

Honourable Speaker, as a former teacher and a mother of teenage girls I support the Motion not that I cannot afford sanitary pads but simply because accidents can happen at school while they do not have it at that specific time.

In conclusion, Honourable Speaker, maybe donations of sanitary products would not provide a sustainable solution but rather constructive underwear with built in waterproof with absorbent panties. These panties are washable and will last for three to five years. It also has SABC absorbency approval and I saw some of those panties. If we are paying, that is a matter of cost.

Honourable Speaker, I support this Motion and thank you.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Deputy Speaker.

HON DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for the floor, Honourable Speaker. I am standing not really to discuss the merit of this Motion but I just want to share my opinion concerning the nature of this Motion.

Yes, indeed there are up there young girls, in particular, from the previous disadvantaged group in particular the san and probably the Ovahimba who need this. I am also aware during my visit last year in Kavango East that some schools are doing their level best to help these young girls but the question is should we debate it here.

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Why cannot the mover just go in terms of the open door policy, discuss it with the concerned Ministry, and say I should think this, this need to be tackled a, b, c, d? Now we are standing here discussing and debating menstruation of young girls the need. I find it uncomfortable honestly, I do. I see the need.

Secondly, the mover is saying this matter should be referred to the relevant Committee. I am a Chairperson of all the Chairpersons of the Committee. They are saying a lot of Motions are referred to them. There is no money to go. There is really no money to go and consult. That is my short intervention. Thank you.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Utoni Nujoma.

HON MINISTER OF LAND REFORM: Thank you, Comrade Speaker. I rise also to make a contribution to this debate.

I, as a father of young girls, also and from experience during the liberation struggle where we were confronted by so many challenges particularly our brave women of the People Liberation Army of Namibia were under those difficult circumstances. I also feel a bit and I agree with Deputy Speaker. I also feel a little uncomfortable.

I am aware that we have developmental challenges and we have developmental rights so I think if our resources could permit, I do not see the reason why we should debate something that is obviously needed by our people, by our society. If we can afford, let us do it. Let it go to Parliamentary Committees and we look into our means.

The need is there but when we are talking about these developmental challenges there is also issues of health, issues of food also coming to

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being. All these are a combination. The United Nations recently adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important that we look at all these issues holistically.

I do not see really to discuss a topic of that nature which is nature. Nature demands that it is something that needs to be addressed. I just wanted to raise those issues that it is part of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is part of that health issues because if you talk about the provision of sanitary pads, you must also talk about clean water because the water maybe contaminated. People are drawing water from the wells where animals are drinking and this is where our people are fetching their water. It is a combination of challenges.

If we were a rich country and we could afford, I could say immediately and I was the Minister of Finance. I would sign the cheque immediately. There is no question about it. Thank you, Comrade Speaker.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. I know you had to stop at the point where you talk about signing of the cheque, Honourable Witbooi please.

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I also rise to make my contribution on the Motion of Honourable Venaani for the National Assembly to discuss the provision of free sanitary pads to the needy schoolgirls.

Honourable Members allow me to inform this august House that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has amongst its programs coordination mechanism structure for the implementation of the national gender policy. This mechanism has six implementing clusters namely gender base violence and human rights chaired by the Ministry of Gender

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Equality and Child Welfare, health and HIV and Aids chaired by the Ministry of Health, education and girl child chaired by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, poverty, rural and economic development chaired now. Previously it was under the National Planning Commission, but now it is under that Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, governance, peace and security under the Prime Minister's office, media research information and communication under the Ministry of ICT and all these clusters are chaired by the Permanent Secretaries.

The education and girl child cluster is chaired as I said already by the Ministry of Arts and Culture whereby quarterly meetings are held and it is during these meetings that all issues affecting the girl child are discussed. The cluster is aimed at providing technical support to reduce gender inequality in education, to improve education retention and completion rate for girls and boys. Therefore, when referring to the retention rate of girls in school, the concern of Honourable Venaani is definitely covered under this cluster.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has also carried out comprehensive consultative regional gender permanent taskforce meetings and the last one was held last week for the Omaheke, Karas and Hardap regions which were aimed at effective implementation of the national gender policy, national gender plan of action, the gender base violence plan of action and then the composition of both the national and regional gender permanent taskforces including implementing clusters are made out of the Government, the NGOs, the civil society, faith based organisation, traditional authorities as well as our development partners where possible for example, the UNDP.

As you are aware Honourable Members the Cabinet approved the gender responsive budgeting guidelines which requires all the Ministries, Offices and Agencies to make budget provision in adherence with the principle of gender responsive budgeting. It means all institutions should submit to the Ministry of Finance a gender sensitive and responsive budget with explicit gender budgeted activities thus issues affecting the girl child such

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as the provision of free sanitary pads to the needy schools girls should be budgeted for by the line Ministry.

Comrade Speaker as I am talking now this programme is already taking place at some schools the provision of free sanitary pads to the needy schoolgirls. We just need to improve on that and then also ask our other stakeholders like the businesses to assist the Government in this regard but there are programs in place already. Therefore, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members I can advise that the Standing Committee on Gender Equality.

HON SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

HON DIENDA: May I have a question please, Honourable Deputy Minister?

Honourable Deputy Minister, just for our information, is there at least two schools that you can mention because I was recently teaching at a High School Secondary School and we the teachers had to collect money amongst ourselves to buy pads and that school was one of the previous disadvantaged schools and we were not even allowed to buy pain killers to have it there at the school. If something like that happens, we were told it is the responsibility of the parents to come and pick up their children.

Has the rules changed now and which schools are being receiving these pads? Thank you.

**HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD
WELFARE:** Thank you, Comrade Speaker.

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Thank you for the question Honourable Member, I will advise you to go to the regional offices.

There is someone responsible for counselling at the regional offices. The names of the schools are available there at our regional offices as I am talking now. Otherwise, you can come to my Ministry. Then I can provide you with the list but call the regional offices. There are schools.

The list is available at the regional offices and the person responsible for counselling for example in Karas region Ms Mary Smith contact her. For the Hardap region Ms Otovan contact her.

Therefore, I would like to advise the Member and then also the House for the relevant Standing Committee to invite the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to clarify and give you more information in this regard.

Honourable Speaker, I do not see the need to be referred to a Committee to go out in the regions on that Motion. They can just call for Ministry of Gender Equality, the Ministry of Education and if they want more about the clusters the Ministries that I have mentioned call them for more information. With that, I thank you.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Kandumbu, please.

HON KANDUMBU: Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

I would like to ask for the indulgence of the House to postpone the debate to next week Tuesday.

HON SPEAKER: Well, I have a list in front of me. Let me exhaust that

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before we consider your request. Honourable Ithete, please.

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Members this Motion is reminding me of the years under the leadership of Comrade Pohamba Shifeta as President of NANSO by then, Comrade Collen Kamehozu the late may his soul rest in peace that time myself as the Chairperson of NANSO in the far northern region visiting the schools making sure that every school should have emergency kits, where we are having pills for headache, for anything, for any injury. We always make sure that pads are also included and I should really say it has happened during those years.

It was early in the 1990s, and I should have the belief that until today, schools have those emergency kits and they do cater for the pads as well. If there is any school that does not have it, I am asking the other schools countrywide to include the pads for our girls. When nature calls, they are ready at schools. Thank you very much.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Nghipondoka, Deputy Minister.

HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I am withdrawing.

HON SPEAKER: I think you were well covered by your Colleague. Honourable Mushelenga please, Doctor.

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HON MUSHELENGA**

**HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND CORPORATION:** Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I want to support the previous speaker the Deputy Minister of Gender Equality but also to thank Honourable Venaani that he took a man to introduce a Motion that speaks to the welfare of our girl children.

As it was said by the Deputy Minister sometimes we have these Motions here then we have Standing Committees going out and it take months to bring the report here. The question is do we all agree there is a problem. It appears there is consensus in the House that there is a problem and if there is a problem, how urgent do we need to address the problem.

Do we want to wait for months to go from one region to another region, there is no budget for the Committee maybe you wait, push it to another cycle or do we want to address the problem now? I believe it is a problem that needs an immediate attention. Therefore, perhaps let us look to the ways in which we can accelerate addressing the problem rather than getting a long route that will take time because in the meantime, the girl child continue to suffer those that are in a needy. I know of this.

I have experienced this at school where you really have these girls staying away and perhaps it should not just be a question of addressing the supply of the necessary sanitation but even to sort of provide information to these young girls especially for the first time. They are caught unaware and they become embarrassing to them amongst other learners. I thank you.

HON SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I have exhausted my list, but Honourable Member call for – she would like to make a contribution and she would like the debate to continue the next day. If there is no further contribution, I would like to address that particular question. Yes, Right Honourable Prime Minister.

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RT HON PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. The Minister of Gender and Child Welfare made a point that is important.

That is to say, the matter is receiving attention and I think that it is important that this House react to that information from the Deputy Minister would we want to pursue a discussion on this issue or do we want to acknowledge the information from the Deputy Minister and attempt to acquaint ourselves with what is happening at the Ministry.

I thought it would be appropriate for us to actually get ourselves acquainted with what the Ministry is trying to do instead of continuing to explore the possibility to start a parallel process and in fact, I could not spot the Honourable Member because she was speaking behind me and I was looking for Comrade Doreen because right really from the beginning, I thought and I have indicated that previously on a number of occasion that it would also be nice that when there are important issues that we think need to be addressed, it would also do well if we try privately, especially as Members of Parliament to inquire with relevant Ministries what is happening.

If we then find that what is happening, is not sufficient and there is a case for us to institute additional efforts, then we do that. Otherwise, we end up duplicating efforts actually spending time and efforts trying to investigate issues that may already have been taken up by Government Ministries. I move so Honourable Speaker.

HON SPEAKER: I think your point is well taken, but it does not necessarily prevent us from continuing with the discussion if there are Members who would like to prepare themselves to make their contributions. It was in that light that I was basically responding to your request if you so wish to continue the debate tomorrow, we can do that.

If there are people who feel they have issues to bring before the House, I

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think we should permit that and I think I do agree with you Prime Minister that the Deputy Minister of Gender has actually provided us with the information that many people were not aware of.

When I was listening to the Mover of the Motion, my mind went to some of the schools that we visited recently in Kunene, in Omusati regions and I think despite the fact things are being done, I think the Deputy Minister has admitted the fact that there is a room for further improvement and I think those are some of the issues that we would like to interrogate and see how we might be able to strengthen the work that is being done already.

The Honourable Member is insisting want to make a contribution tomorrow. We can do that, Tuesday. Is there any objection to that? Fine. We will grant that. Thank you very much.

I was trying to rush her, good. That said and done I think basically it has brought us to the end of our various items for today's session and I now wish to request that Honourable Prime Minister.

HON DEPUTY SPEAKER: Tomorrow we only have one agenda point, correct. Prudently, can we – no, I am not deciding. I am asking the opinion.

HON SPEAKER: This is one of the reason why I wanted to combine it so we have it tomorrow because there are people who would like to make contributions, next week Tuesday. You are comfortable not to have a meeting tomorrow because we have one item tomorrow so you are saying we should postpone it to Tuesday, but do we not have questions for Thursday. We do have questions, is it not so?

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**HON DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND CORPORATION:** Honourable Speaker, I am just worried. This is how we start pushing and postponing agendas.

At the end of the time, we start to get crash items having already wasted time when we have enough time. We do not even know how many Members are prepared to contribute to the item. We have questions on Thursday.

Again, if we push them again, by the time we come to the closing of the session then we start now to say we have little time.

Why do we not leave issues to be discussed so that people can even discuss with enough time while they are not pressurised by too many items on the agenda?

HON SPEAKER: The consensus, as I can see, is that tomorrow it will not make sense to meet in view of the limited items before us. Can I then respectfully suggest that we target Thursday? We do not have many questions. Those items that are remaining, we can combine with questions and deal with that and that I think will make us feel a little bit happier that we have spend the necessary time in dealing with some of the important issues. Is that in agreement? d'Accord? Thank you very much.

With that now, I can repeat my request to the Right Honourable Prime Minister to adjourn the House. We saw you but unfortunately, we have finished all the items, Right Honourable Prime Minister.

HON PRIME MINISTER: Honourable Speaker, I Move that the House adjourn until Thursday 14:30.

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**ADJOURNMENT
HON PROF KATJAVIVI**

HON SPEAKER: The House stand adjourns until Thursday.

HOUSE ADJOURNS AT 16:10 UNTIL 2016.10.06 AT 14:30
